

In announcing its intention to broadcast a piece of self-serving political propaganda disguised as journalism on the eve of a presidential election, Sinclair Broadcasting has deprived itself of all right to make use of the nation's airwaves. Sinclair has an obligation to serve the interests of the public whose airwaves it uses free of charge; instead it has chosen to use those airwaves to pursue its own interests. Sinclair's philosophy seems to be that it should be allowed to deceive the public at the public's expense.

Conventional free speech arguments about Sinclair being allowed to "say whatever it wants to" do not hold in this instance. These arguments would hold if Sinclair were speaking at its own expense; in this case, because it is making use of public airwaves, Sinclair is speaking at the public's expense. In essence, Sinclair is a public institution, and it must be accountable to the public for the content of its programs. Since the public could not have any conceivable interest in receiving biased information, Sinclair is acting in defiance in the trust placed in it by the American people as represented by the FCC.

Not only should Sinclair be prevented from broadcasting its election-eve anti-Kerry political advertisement, but its licenses should be revoked, and it should be denied all future access to the airwaves. After attempting this stunt, Sinclair does not deserve second chances. Put them out of business.